



THE CONNECTICUT PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION, INC.

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Members of the Education Committee:

My name is Dr. Mikaru Shichi Lasher. I am a licensed psychologist with a doctorate in Educational Psychology. I am also a member of the Connecticut Psychological Association Children & Youth Committee. I would like to provide supportive testimony regarding Senate Bill 1138, "An Act Concerning the Strengthening of School Bullying Laws". I commend the legislature on the continued efforts to address this important issue, including the initial passage of the bullying prevention bill of 2002.

I am heartened by the inclusion of policy in the proposed bill that addresses the need for a comprehensive bullying prevention program that expands the need to create a safe environment for children both in school and other places outside of the school grounds. I appreciate the effort to include all school personnel, parents, and students in education on bullying prevention and how to create a positive climate. Focusing on prevention and increasing positive behaviors promotes a safe learning environment through the teaching of empathy, respect for self and others, strategies for self-control and defusing provocative situations, helpful bystander behavior, and increased adult supervision.

The provisions outlined in Senate Bill 1138 are supported by the research literature which indicates that comprehensive, multifaceted bullying prevention programs that are implemented school-wide and involve staff, students, and parents are effective in reducing the incidence of bullying in schools. A comprehensive program includes the following components: a) implementing systemic changes such as the development of clear school policies and consequences to acts of bullying, b) increasing adult awareness and intervention, c) building students' skills in assertiveness and emotional regulation, d) changing student attitudes toward bullying, e) increasing bystanders' socially responsible behavior and the associated skills and beliefs, and f) accurately tracking and reporting bullying incidents to determine whether programs are effective.

I would very much like to see the implementation of Senate Bill 1138 in order for schools and communities in Connecticut to be able to provide comprehensive, system-wide bullying prevention programs. Thank you for your consideration, and for your continued leadership in making our schools safer for our children.